

A MODERN LAUNDRY

By CLARA D. NOYES

Graduate of Johns Hopkins Hospital; Superintendent of St. Luke's Hospital,
New Bedford, Mass.

THE new laundry at St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford, Massachusetts, was completed and ready for use March 1, 1907.

A description of this building and its working methods may be of some assistance to the busy superintendent of the smaller hospital, who is perhaps interested in a new building or the reorganization of an old laundry.

Lest we be accused of extravagance, I should like to explain that we were anxious to erect a building at as small a cost as possible, yet at the same time preserve our standards in all directions as to substantial and durable construction and simplicity in arrangement and equipment.

To provide for the future growth of the hospital, the building was planned amply large, sixty feet long by forty wide. The frame is of iron, the walls, best quality Dover river brick, roof of slate and all conductors are of copper. The inside walls and partitions are of white enamelled brick, the ceiling of hard pine painted with four coats of white with a final coat of enamel. The floors are granolithic, doors and window sashes and all frames and woodwork of ash, varnished, door knobs of glass. All pipes are covered, painted white, and bound with brass strips. The windows are numerous and large, all are screened and provided with inside shades of dark green.

The bright, clean, airy appearance furnished by this white interior, and abundant light and sunshine would satisfy the most æsthetic taste, while an opportunity to see dirt and remove it easily is thus afforded. The hose is used, in conjunction with a long handled brush, about once a month, on these walls, keeping them sweet and clean.

Although the expense of putting in white enamelled brick partitions and walls is quite large, the results are well worth the additional outlay and in the end is more economical, as it does away with the frequent painting, breaking of plaster and difficult and expensive cleaning of walls.

The building is entered by means of a granolithic incline; this allows the laundry cart to be pushed into the building for loading and unloading. The front door, which is a large double one, opens into an entry. On the right is a receiving room for soiled linen, at the side of

this room is a half partition which is also divided, one end furnishing a closet for brooms, brushes, etc., the other a toilet and dressing room fitted with set bowl, closet and hooks. This room is lighted by two large windows and communicates directly with the wash room, which is twenty-two by forty-five feet, lighted by four large windows with side lights and transoms, height of ceiling is fifteen feet.

On the left of the entry is the sorting room for clean linen, with counter for folding, and individual, hard-wood, open compartments for the nurses, doctors and help. These are furnished with name plates into which a card can easily be placed. This room opens into the ironing room, which is fifteen by forty-five feet. At the rear end of this ironing room is a door leading into a large drying ground by means of an incline.

EQUIPMENT

The receiving room is fitted with two large boxes with hinged covers; these are very useful for storing linen tidily, although no soiled linen is ever left over night in this room.

The toilet room, which is part of this room, is very essential and should be sufficiently large to allow the help comfortable dressing quarters, as many of them live outside the hospital. The broom closet is also important. I personally prefer a closet of this description rather than one built into the walls, which is usually dark and hard to keep clean.

Wash room.—The arrangement and equipment of this room is very important as here the heaviest work of the laundry is done, and a convenient arrangement of machinery is necessary. I give a list of our machinery which we find satisfactory:

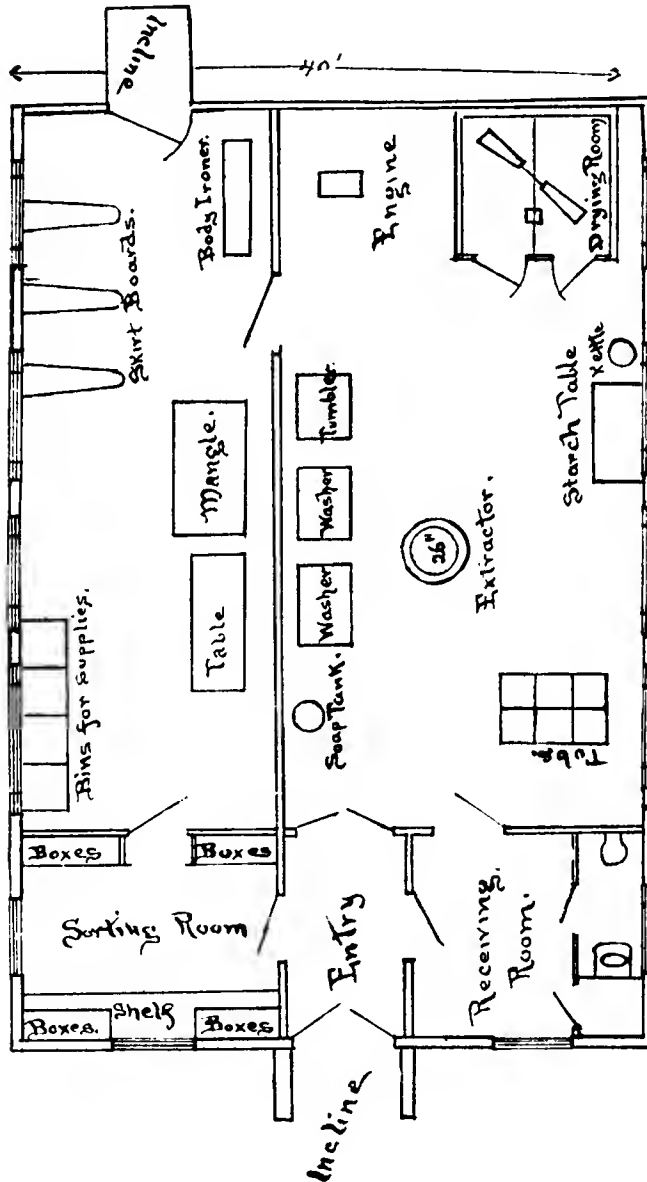
- Two (2) washers, wooden, one hundred (100) shirt capacity.
- One (1) tumbler or shaker.
- One (1) twenty-six (26) inch extractor.
- Two (2) dryers.
- One (1) engine, twelve (12) horse power, horizontal.
- One (1) starch kettle, steam jacketed.
- One (1) starch table, zinc top.
- One (1) soap-tank, copper, forty (40) gallons capacity.
- Six (6) white, porcelain set tubs (four would be sufficient).
- One (1) clock, large wall.
- One (1) truck, hard-wood, for transporting wet goods.
- Two (2) clothes baskets, ten (10) bushel, fitted with trucks.
- Two (2) wall closets, hard-wood, for engine supplies and storing blue, measuring glasses, pails, dippers, etc.

FIG. 1.



LAUNDRY
St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford, Mass.

Several clothes horses of special design, with ball bearing wheels. These may be seen in out of ironing room; they are very strong, easily moved, roomy, and were made at a cost of twelve dollars and sixty-six cents each.



The washers are placed in a depression fitted with central drains sufficiently far from the wall to allow an individual to pass easily back of them; this brings the over-head shafting well out and makes it comparatively easy to keep both walls and machinery clean. The set tubs are placed back to back across the end of the room at least four feet from walls at end and side.

The engine is accessible from all sides and sufficiently far from walls to prevent spattering; and to prevent the floor from becoming oily, rubber matting is neatly fitted around the engine. The extractor stands in the middle of the room between the two washers. The tumbler is on a line with the two washers.

The dryer is a sectional cabinet room, fitted with steam coil and fan, lined throughout with asbestos and galvanized metal with four portable trucks. The advantages of this style of dry room are very apparent. It occupies very little floor space, is easily kept clean, economical to operate and owing to the rapidity with which goods are dried, a large amount of work can be handled in a short space of time.

The tumbler is a very useful feature. Its value does not seem to me to be fully known in the average wash-room. The goods come from the extractor in hard masses requiring time and strength to shake out if done by hand; thrown into a tumbler, they are well shaken out in a few minutes without injury and at a great saving of strength. After leaving the tumbler the goods are ready for sorting for the mangle or dryer, as the case may be.

The ironing room is fitted with the following machinery:

One (1) sixty-four (64) inch mangle.

One (1) body ironer, gas-heated.

Three (3) ironing boards with individual gas stoves.

One (1) large, substantial table for receiving clean linen.

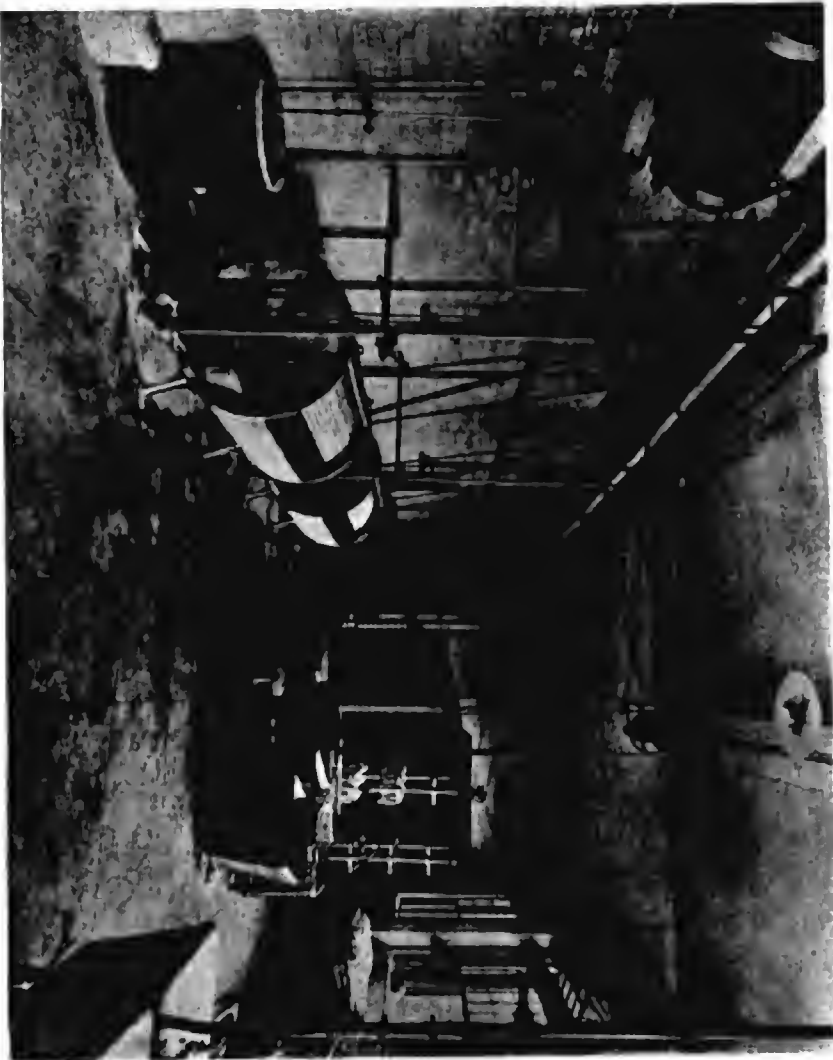
Four (4) hard-wood bins, with hinge covers for starch, soapchips, and Wyandotte soda; capacity of each, one barrel.

These bins furnish a much neater way of storing supplies than that afforded by closets taking in the whole barrel. This room is also fitted with a blower for mixing air with gas.

The door at the rear or west end opens into a large, sunny drying-yard surrounded with a lattice fence with a cinder floor. As much outside drying as possible is done here in pleasant weather.

The cost of building was considerable, but considering the high grade construction and material used, with the present high prices of such materials, and labor, we feel that the results justify the expense and that it has been a good investment.

FIG. 2.



WASH ROOM
St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford, Mass.

I am glad to be able to give the actual figures, which are as follows:

Carpentering and building.....	\$9,541.00
Plumbing.....	1,800.00
Heating (steam fitting).....	1,130.50
Electrical work.....	115.00
Electrical fixtures.....	34.80
Gas piping.....	71.00
Concrete flooring.....	821.00
Hardware.....	66.25
Machinery.....	1,826.00
Screens.....	98.00
Furniture.....	114.00
Total.....	\$15,618.06

The lighting is by electricity, the heating by steam, which is supplied for the engine and mangle from the central heating plant, a distance of two hundred (200) feet. A gauge conspicuously placed on the wall tells the exact number of pounds being supplied. The cost of digging the trenches is included in the figures for steam-fitting.

The body ironer and hand irons are heated by gas and air. The building is in communication with all parts of the hospital by means of a telephone.

A two-wheel push-cart is used for transporting the linen to and from the hospital. In stormy weather the baskets are covered with pieces of rubber sheeting.

Returning to the cost of the building. Many small hospitals could hardly afford to put so much money into a laundry. This building could be considerably modified as to cost. Cheaper building materials could be used, the size reduced, as every foot of outside walls increases the cost considerably, plastered walls introduced, etc. I should recommend, however, that wooden floors and sheathed walls should never be used in a laundry; the reasons for this are so apparent it is hardly necessary to mention them.

At the present time this laundry handles five thousand (5,000) pieces weekly, it is capable of more than doubling the work without additional machinery, as many days the washers are not in operation more than three hours. Three employees do all the work for a daily average household of one hundred and twenty-seven (127) (30 nurses, 5 officers, 22 domestics and 70 patients). It was our custom formerly to allow the employees throughout the hospital to do their own laundry work, a special time being arranged for them. Since opening this new laundry I determined to change this system and have all their work

done for them. This has been a most satisfactory arrangement, there now being no excuse for the house help loitering around the building.

The laundry force consists of three persons, one man and two women: these are fed by the hospital, but live outside. The man transports all the linen, soiled and clean, looks after the engine (consequently he must be a licensed fireman) and machinery, keeping them clean and making repairs. He does all the washing, and extracting, works on body ironer and mangle, and cleans the windows, walls, and floors. The two women sort the linen, work on body ironer and mangle and do all the hand ironing, keep the ironing, sorting and dressing rooms tidy. We employ only the best of laundry help, pay them good wages and expect to get good work. A man who is required to do the work mentioned must be intelligent, honest and trustworthy. If we get these virtues we must expect to compensate accordingly. Cheap, unreliable laundry help is in the end very extravagant. The women we employ must come up to the same standard.

It will be noticed that we put in a sixty-four inch mangle instead of a one hundred inch. This was intentional, as the latter requires four people to manage it while the former requires only two, one on each side. The one hundred inch is very expensive to clothe and to run, it therefore seemed wiser to use the smaller mangle until we were obliged to increase our laundry force.

The nurses' clothing is listed and sent to the laundry in bags, these are sorted and checked off twice by a pupil nurse before and after laundering, making them up finally into bundles ready for delivery. Since the introduction of this system, there has been no difficulty with the lost and unmarked linen question.

To conduct a laundry economically and satisfactorily should be the aim of every individual who is responsible for this department of the hospital work. To accomplish this work, a careful system must prevail, special days must be arranged for washing nurses' body and bed linen, for table linen, flannels, help's linen, gauze, bandages, etc., and as great care should be exercised in the return of the same; ward linen sent one day should be delivered the next, and never allowed to accumulate in the laundry.

Special rules should be printed and framed, governing the care of the laundry, control of visitors, etc. Careful oversight should be given to the use of supplies of all kinds and all avenues of waste and extravagance checked at once. The careful use and careless abuse of the machinery should be taught and investigated continually. The cost of operating a laundry is considerable even with the closest and most care-

FIG. 3.



IRONING ROOM
St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford, Mass.

ful economy. Steam, water, supplies and repairs all count up in the most appalling manner. Whether it is more economical to conduct your own laundry or send your soiled linen to a commercial laundry, is a question I am not prepared to answer. The very limited experience I have had in that direction has not been very encouraging and the results we have obtained from our own laundry have been exceedingly satisfactory. We pay our laundry help ninety-seven dollars per month, laundry man fifty dollars, one laundress twenty-seven dollars, one twenty dollars. These figures may seem high, but as I have no housekeeper to oversee the laundry work, I must depend upon the help to do honest work with such daily supervision as I can afford to give, and it would be out of the question to employ ignorant, unreliable help.

All the sorting is done by these three; torn linen, up to a certain point, is delivered in the sewing room. They begin work at seven A.M. and leave when the day's work is finished; on Saturday they usually leave by two P.M. and don't return to the hospital until Monday morning. They are obliged to leave the laundry tidy, linen sorted and packed ready to deliver at seven A.M., before they leave the building. Saturday morning, a thorough cleaning is given the entire place.

I have gone into details, hoping that by so doing, I should be of some real assistance to the superintendent who is struggling with the laundry question. I do not claim that our system or building is the best, but I find the greatest benefit in studying prevailing methods in other institutions, consequently I have not hesitated to describe our modest plant and its working system.

For further details as to washing, mangling, and practical laundry work in operation here, I should like to refer the reader to my paper read before the Superintendents of Training Schools in April, 1906, and afterwards printed in *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* for July of that year.



AN INOFFENSIVE LIGHT.—*The Medical Record*, quoting from *The Nurses' Journal of the Pacific Coast*, says: A convenient night-light for a sick room in a country house in which there is neither gas nor electricity may be improvised by hanging a lantern from a hook screwed into the bottom of an upper window sash on the outside. The light within the room may be regulated by raising or lowering the shade. This obviates the heat and odor from an ordinary lamp in the room.